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REMARKS

An in-person Examiner interview was conducted on March 30, 2006 with Examiner Sunil Singh in connection with the above-identified patent application. The Examiner interview was conducted at the United States Patent and Trademark Office and included the inventor/applicant Jim Cook and Mr. Cook's coworker and colleague Tom Breen, as well as Mr. Cook's representative Erik J. Overberger.

During the interview, a demonstration was conducted by Mr. Cook. Specifically, Mr. Cook used several bolt assemblies to show the operation of prior art mine roof bolt assemblies, the drawbacks of the prior art bolt assemblies, and the operation of a correctly installed bolt assembly according to the disclosure of the subject application. The independent claims, namely claims 33, 43, 46 and 49, including the amendments thereto presented in the previously submitted Preliminary Amendment, were discussed during the interview, along with the primary reference applied against the independent claims (i.e., Ernst et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,816,759). The Examiner indicated that he was able to appreciate that there were patentable distinctions between the prior art, including Ernst, and the subject matter of the subject application. However, the Examiner was of the opinion that the currently pending independent claims (as amended in the previous Preliminary Amendment) were insufficient to patentably define over the Ernst reference.

The Examiner indicated that the independent claims would be allowable if amended to include language such as "when a support device is in a final installed state the first end of the shell does not engage the bore hole." The Examiner further indicated that he would not require this exact and specific language to be included in each of the independent claims, but including the general thrust of the Examiner's language would likely secure allowance of the claims.

Together, Examiner Singh and Mr. Overberger determined that a Supplemental Preliminary Amendment should be prepared and submitted wherein the independent claims could be further amended to include the language proposed by the Examiner or reasonable variations thereof. Accordingly, this paper has been prepared and submitted by Mr. Overberger. As provided in the preceding section, the independent claims have been amended to include the Examiner's suggested language and/or reasonable variations thereof.
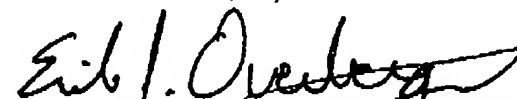
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CONCLUSION

All formal and informal matters having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. It is believed that the claim changes clearly place the application in condition for allowance, defining over any fair teaching attributable to the references of record. Alternatively, if the Examiner is of the view that the application is still not in clear condition for allowance, it is requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned for purposes of conducting another Interview to resolve any outstanding differences. Accordingly, an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

FAY, SHARPE, FAGAN,
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April 18, 2006
Date

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Certificate of Mailing

Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.8, I certify that this Supplemental Preliminary Amendment is being

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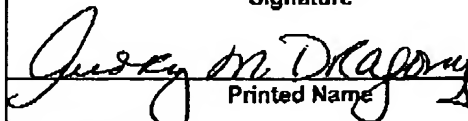
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